

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 DPW-01 DHA-02 SCS-03 SCA-01

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PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /085 W

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R 181058Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5780

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY VIENTIA E

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 26390

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SWEL, VS

SUBJECT: ICRC ACTIVITIES IN SOUTH VIET-NAM

SUMMARY: ICRC OFFICIAL HOCKE IS REPORTEDLY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT HIS ORGANIZATION'S FUTURE IN SOUTH VIET-NAM, ALTHOUGH INSPECTION OF COMMODITY DISTRIBUTION REMAINS A PROBLEM. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBASSY OFFICER CALLED ON ICRC DELEGATE FRANCOIS ZEN RUFFINEN DECEMBER 18 TO DISCUSS ISSUE OF AMERICANS IN SOUTH VIET-NAM. ZEN RUFFINEN SAID ICRC OFFICE IN SAIGON CONTINUES TO ENCOUNTER MANY PROBLEMS IN ITS OPERATION BUT ORGANIZATION IS CONVINCED THAT, IN ITS CHIEF FUNCTITN AT PRESENT OF CARING FOR ESTIMATED 6000 FOREIGNERS STILL IN SOUTH VIET-NAM, OFFICE REMAINS QUITE USEFUL. HE NOTED THAT ICRC DIRECTOR OF ACTIVITIES JEAN PIERRE HTCCKE, WHO PASSED THROUGH BANGKOK BRIEFLY AFTER VISIT TO NORTH AND SOUTH VIET-NAM, WAS SURPRISED BY WARMTH OF RECEPTION LOCAL VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS GAVE HIM DURING HIS STAY IN SAIGON NOVEMBER 28 - DECEMBER 3, MAKING HIM OPTIMISTIC ABOUT ICRC'S FUTURE THERE. DESPITE FACT HE RECEIVED NO SPECIFIC

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ASSURANCES RE DEPARTURE OF AMERICANS OR OTHER NATIONALITIES,

HOCKE REPORTEDLY CAME AWAY WITH IMPRESSION THAT ALL THOSE WHO WISHED TO LEAVE WOULD BE PERMITTED TO DO SO.

2. PRINCIPAL ISSUE BETWEEN PRG AND ICRC REMAINS DISTRIBUTION OF ITEMS CONTRIBUTED BY RED CROSS AND SHIPPED INTO SAIGON AND DA NANG PORTS. ICRC EXPLANATION OF NEED TO OBSERVE DISTRIBUTION IN ORDER TO JUSTIFY FURTHER SHIPMENTS CONTINUES TO FALL ON DEAF EARS. HOCKE WAS PERMITTED TO MAKE TOKEN INSPECTION OF A DISTRIBUTION AT A LOCATION OUTSIDE SAIGON DURING VISIT, BUT ZEN RUFFINEN GAVE IMPRESSION THAT THIS ISSUE REMAINS UNRESOLVED. HE SAID ICRC FACES SAME DILEHMA IN ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO NORTH VIET-NAM, DESPITE GOOD RED CROSS RELATIONS WITH THAT COUNTRY.

3. SOUTH VIET-NAM HAS STILL NOT AGREED TO REGULAR POUCH EXCHANGE BETWEEN ICRC OFFICES IN BANGKOK AND SAIGON. EACH POUCH, SUCH AS ONE WHICH WENT IN YESTERDAY, REQUIRES SEPARATE NEGOTIATION.

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